



## Interview With GEN Paul J. Kern, Commander, Army Materiel Command

(Left to right) Walt Adamczyk, a Quality Engineer in the Program Management Brigade Combat Team at the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM), Warren, MI; Wanda Gilbert, AMC fellow; and Calvin Haggen, a Quality Assurance Specialist with the Defense Contracting Management Agency, TACOM; stand in front of a Nuclear Biological Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicle at the Army Tank Plant in Lima, OH, where they performed a final inspection record on the vehicle. (photo by Paul Gherian)

**Q:** Fifty percent of your workforce is reaching retirement. You lost nearly a full generation of workers during the 1990s reductions. What is your plan to revitalize your workforce?

**A:** AMC is in transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age. Our workforce has been trained to use processes and tools that worked well in the last part of the 20th century. Today, high schools and colleges teach new Information Age skills, such as parallel processing on real-time systems, skills unfamiliar to most of our workforce. The successor force, which will come from our student employment, apprentice, intern and fellows programs, will bring these skills with them. In May, I went to the NASCAR races. NASCAR is the largest spectator sport in the world. Average attendance is 80,000 people. Very technically

oriented people attend NASCAR, including those in the racing business. What a great opportunity for recruiting civilian engineers, particularly for our tank automotive operations. What a parallel — tank automotive and NASCAR racing! How many places like that can we find where we can double up with recruiters?

**Q:** You wrote that “success or failure of Army transformation depends in large measure on the quality and effectiveness of the AMC workforce.” Can the AMC workforce really have such a dramatic effect on Army transformation?

**A:** Absolutely! You don’t achieve successes through organizations and machines. You achieve them through the people in those organizations who use the equipment. We are about half the size we were 12 years ago, so our people must

work harder and learn new skills at the same time. The number of deployments we send scientists, engineers, logisticians and mechanics on is increasing. We have 8,000 soldiers, civilians and contractors in the desert supporting *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. We need to employ people who understand the new technologies. They need to know the challenges of the deployments and environments that we operate in, whether it is the mountains of Afghanistan, the deserts of Kuwait, the jungles of the Philippines, Germany or the area south of the Balkans. Army transformation requires a workforce that is comfortable operating in these many different environments, with new technologies and new tools that are emerging in the 21st century. This successor group must get the experience from the current employees who have been through this for the

last 20-30 years. We cannot transform the Army without transforming AMC's people.

**Q:** The AMC workplace environment continues to change with unprecedented technological advances. How are you preparing your workforce for this change?

**A:** The biggest work process change in AMC is LOGMOD [a logistics enterprise system]. We have re-trained a very large segment of our workforce and we did it online and

face-to-face. New ways of doing things can bring people together, although sometimes it scares people to relearn doing something. The reality is, we have to deal with the human side very carefully to make sure we don't ask our employees to do something we haven't prepared them for.

**Q:** How do you encourage students, midlevel workers and others to perform public service as a government employee?

**A:** When we show some folks the things that we are doing, they get excited. They can't find jobs like this in other sectors. AMC gives them a lot more responsibility. We send them off to Afghanistan to take a robot into a cave. They say "Wow, I can help a soldier stay out of harm's way with these new capabilities." Employees will be rewarded financially, but more importantly, they will be rewarded because they are doing something that is interesting and productive.



## Interview With Vic Ferlise, Civilian Deputy, Communications-Electronics Command

Thomas Sturges, standing, of AMRDEC's Software Engineering Directorate, demonstrates the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle simulator to a college student attending the Technological Excellence in Aviation, Missiles and Space Week 2003 Conference. (photo by Kimberly Danford)

**Q:** How would you describe the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command's (CECOM's) Workforce Revitalization?

**A:** Revitalization at CECOM has been going on for some time. Two years ago the average employee was 48 years old and we found that our folks retired around 60 years old. CECOM uses all the reshape tools provided by DOD and met every downsizing target without a reduction in force throughout the 1990s. In the last 2 years, through extraordinary efforts, we were able to hire 1,500 people, mostly college graduates. Our average age remains 48. Also scooped up were some outstanding midcareer engineers from the dot-coms. We have a reshape tool that industry can't match — excess military housing leased to new engineers for \$300 per month. That's not a bad deal for a house on the Jersey Shore

while we introduce them to the CECOM work, and it's also good for CECOM because we would have been subsidizing these empty units.

**Q:** What kind of work is done at CECOM? What makes it an Employer of First Choice?

**A:** Fort Monmouth, NJ, has a rich history of research and development. However, 20 years ago, the leadership adopted a strategy that industry would lead the way in C4ISR [command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] technology development; the Army would leverage that technology. In the 1970s, organizations like Bell Laboratories were cranking out three patents a day trying to win the Nobel Prize for physics and science. Enormously talented organizations like Bell Labs have now transformed and are driven to return

rapid profits. Today, we are swinging back to a time where we need to be leaders in the development of technology where industry is not investing. We need to be investing heavily in capabilities like night vision. Unlike industry, we are not profit-driven and our engineers can focus on developing these great concepts. You ask, where is the advantage for our soldiers? Where is the science? Where is the advancement? It makes for a great place to work and challenges the engineers to be all they can be. One of the things that motivates people is to do work that they think is important, and we have the time and money to let them do it. Most importantly, though, we have the need. These people can see their products saving lives and that is why CECOM is an Employer of First Choice!